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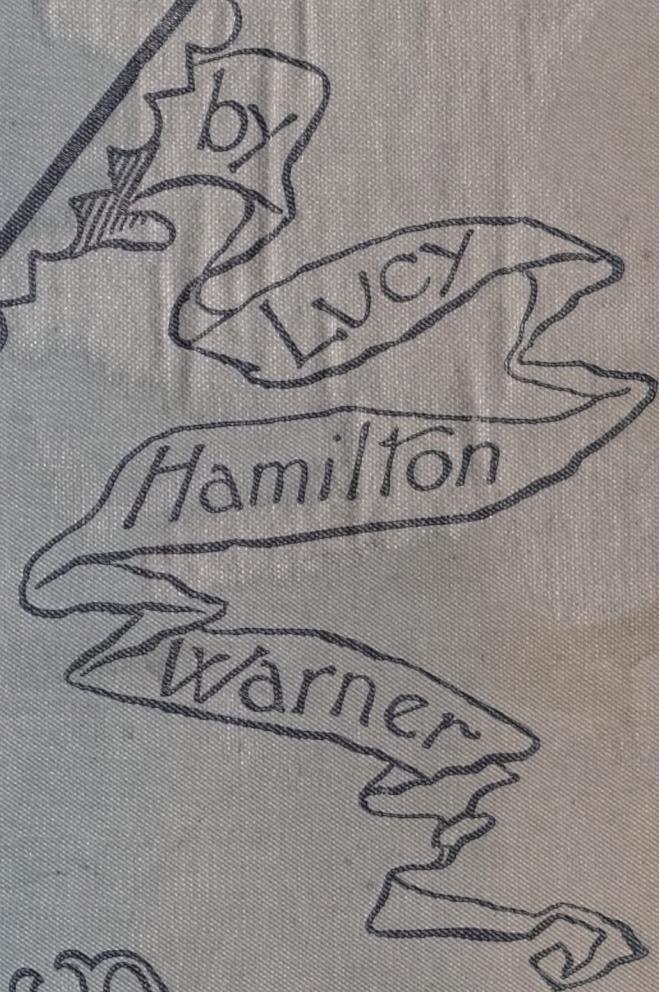
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by
Lucy
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Queen Wishtah summons the Four Little Elves -

THE LITTLE ELVES
SEEKING
THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

A BOOK FOR CHILDREN

BY ✓
LUCY HAMILTON WARNER

Author of
"THE FIVE LITTLE FINGER STORIES"
And Other Stories

ILLUSTRATED BY GEO. W. BARDWELL

NEW YORK
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1895



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LUCY HAMILTON WARNER

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I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE VOLUME TO

My Father,

WHOSE TOUCH OF GENTLENESS AND LOVE EVER
WARMs MY HEART

The Author

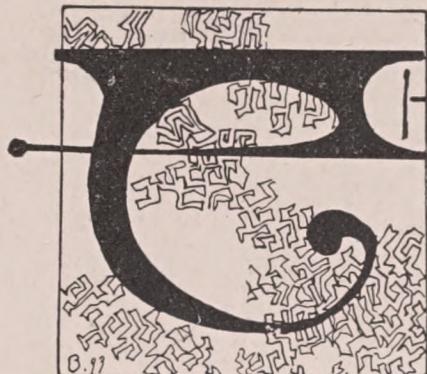
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THE LITTLE ELVES
SEEKING
THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

PART I

CHAPTER I



beautiful Queen Wishtah had quite decided to change her home from the Northern to the Southern clime.

She had heard of evergreen groves, where around each pine-tree could be built a palace that would stand for years.

So she summoned to her presence four of her trusty elves, named Spider Eyes, Chip Wing, Pointed Toes and Dusty Cap.

They came and knelt before the throne, waiting her command.

She reached forth her wand and said: "Arise, go seek one of those wonderful pine groves, for therein shall my palace be built. This Norseland is too cold and bleak. I will hold court in a warmer clime."

The elves arose at their Queen's bidding, and set off on their journey.

They traveled south, they traveled east, and they traveled west.



THE ELVES' DEPARTURE

One day, after a longer flight than usual, as they were resting beneath a willow-tree, they saw some children playing, and in their play they called to each other: "Let us go to see the beautiful world," and with a merry shout they all joined hands, still singing as off they ran: "Let us go, we wish to see the beautiful world."

Now spoke up Spider Eyes: "That is just what I have been wishing to do. What if we also go to see the beautiful world?"

"We must first make ready the Queen's palace, then we might leave and go in quest of the beautiful world," responded Pointed Toes.

"It cannot be far, and it must be very beautiful, for did you not see how joyfully the children all went?" said Spider Eyes.

They then flew into a pine grove, and very soon transformed it into enchanted Elfland.

"Now all is ready for Her Majesty," said Chip Wing.

"Yes," answered Spider Eyes, "and as it will be some days before she comes, we will have time to go in search of the beautiful world."

"I am not going," said Dusty Cap, "for no one will be here to welcome her when she arrives."

"O yes," answered Spider Eyes, "we will soon return, then we will tell her of the beautiful world and she will want to go there also."

"Come! come! brothers," exclaimed Chip Wing, "I am in such a hurry. We are only wasting time lingering here."

So off they flew, Spider Eyes leading the way, although he knew not what direction to take. Suddenly he stopped, saying: "I am going to ask the first one we meet which is the way to the beautiful world?"

CHAPTER II



WHILE Spider Eyes was talking, being quite tired, he sat down on what he thought to be a brown stone, but much to his surprise he felt the stone rising.

He called out in alarm: "Oh! where am I going? The earth is quaking!"

He heard a laugh and the stone shook under him.

"You sat down on my back, so I thought I would give you a ride," said the brown creature under him.

Then he saw he was sitting on Mr. Garden Toad, who brought him down to the ground with a flop.

Chip Wing, Pointed Toes and Dusty Cap ran to learn what was the matter, and to see if he was safe.

On a nearer view of Mr. Toad, they thought he was the ugliest thing they had ever seen.

There he sat, all dressed in dirty brown, his big eyes bulging out on either side of his head, and right back of each eye was a big white wart.

He looked so hideous as he opened his mouth to grin that the elves shook with fear.

"Well! well! my little men," he said, trying to look his best, "what do you want? This is not Elfland. What have you come here for, and where are you going?"

"Oh," answered Spider Eyes, still quaking, "we want to see the beautiful world. Can you tell us the way?"

"Yes," replied the toad quickly, "I will gladly do so. I have been there many times. Come, jump upon my back and take a ride. I will hop to the place."

It did not take them long to get seated on his back, for they were already quite tired out with their journey.

How tightly they had to hold on with their feet, for, as he kept leaping and leaping, he chuckled so hard that it made his body shake.

Once he stopped, and Spider Eyes, catching his breath, said: "I think we will walk, if you do not mind."

"Yes," spoke up Pointed Toes. "It will be very much better to walk than to be shaken to pieces."

"No, no!" exclaimed the toad. "You must ride, or else you can not go to the beautiful world. We will reach it very soon, my dearies."

So, against their will, they remained upon his back, as they wanted so much to see the beautiful world.

He hopped, and hopped, and hopped again.

As he was hopping through a hedge, a sharp thistle pierced one of Spider Eyes' wings.



CHAPTER III



"H!" he cried out, "that hurts."

Dusty Cap, seeing the thistle still sticking in Spider Eyes' wing, reached across the back of the toad to draw it out.

The more he pulled the more it hurt, and Spider Eyes groaned with pain.

Pointed Toes and Chip Wing also tried to assist him.

"What is the matter now?" angrily cried Mr. Toad. "You will break my back. Every time you step, you make a dent in it. My back is surely softer than the ground. Do sit still if you want to see the beautiful world."

"Oh, oh!" cried Spider Eyes, "I am in such pain I can go no further. With my torn, hurt wing I cannot enjoy seeing the beautiful world. I must go to our uncle, Dr. Spider, with it."

"Here we are at Dr. Spider's house," said Dusty Cap.

"You jump off, and we will fly up and follow you," said Chip Wing, "for we would not go to the beautiful world without you."

When the toad was getting ready for another hop, off jumped Spider Eyes, and the rest flew off.

It was well they left Mr. Toad just as they did, for they saw him disappear within a dark hole, where, if they had gone too, they would never have seen the light of day again.

Mr. Toad soon appeared at the mouth of the hole and called out to them: "Come, come, and go to the beautiful world."

"No, no!" answered Spider Eyes. "My wing is hurt, and I am going to Dr. Spider's to have it mended."

The toad grew quite angry when he heard this and said: "You must and shall go with me; I will catch you."

How his eyes glared! How wide he opened his mouth. He seemed ready to swallow them.

"No," said Pointed Toes. "We are not going until Spider Eyes' wing is all right."

"But I will make you go," cried the toad, springing towards them in such a rage that they ran to hide.

They knew, then, that he would do them some harm, instead of taking them to the beautiful world.



CHAPTER IV

SPIDER EYES hid in a poppy; Dusty Cap in a rose.

Pointed Toes and Chip Wing flew into a large white lily.

When they peeped out to see if they were safe, they beheld Mr. Toad looking all around for them.

He was scolding and scolding, but all in vain.

His eyes, although they were so big, were not sharp enough to see which way they flew.

What a horrible grunt he uttered! and he stuck his tongue far out of his mouth.

What a long tongue! He seemed to be watching something. Lazily flying by was a large blue fly, and as the fly drew near the toad, the toad made a snap and a jump, then all was still: for that was the end of the poor, poor fly.

The elves grew more afraid, and wished the toad would go away. They heard him say as he peered all around:

“I will catch the little fellows yet. How nice they will be for my supper.”

Of course, they were sorry that Spider Eyes’ wing was hurt, yet they could not help feeling glad that all this happened, for it had saved them from such a sad fate.

Dusty Cap looked out from his hiding-place in the rose, and there sat the toad at the foot of the bush.

He smothered a cry and drew back in alarm, hoping the toad had not spied him.

Pointed Toes whispered to Chip Wing: "I wish something would frighten him away."

And Chip Wing said softly: "I feel very anxious about Spider Eyes."

They loved the flowers, but they were now tired of staying in them, for they wanted to be on their way to the beautiful world.

Yet there they were, prisoners to the toad! When would he go away!

As they were wishing and waiting, they heard some merry children laughing, and were wondering where they were, when out into the garden came the children, singing as they skipped along, "Let us go to the beautiful world."

Mr. Toad, in his fright, forgot all about the little elves and jumped far away and hid.

Soon everything was so still that Dusty Cap ventured to creep out of the rose, and then he saw that they were free once more. He called:

"Spider Eyes! Chip Wing! Pointed Toes! Come out! There is nothing to fear. The toad has gone."

Chip Wing and Pointed Toes answered with joy: "We are coming!" and flew out of the lily.

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THE
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PY.



CHAPTER V

THEY waited and listened; still Spider Eyes did not appear.

They turned to each other in alarm, saying, "Where is he? We are sure the toad did not catch him, for we were watching all the while."

"Spider Eyes! Spider Eyes!" they called; but he did not answer.

"Come," they said at last, in despair, "we will fly from flower to flower until we find him."

They searched first in the daisy, then in the hollyhock and the roses all over; then in the trumpet vine.

Still he could not be found.

Pointed Toes and Dusty Cap were about to shout his name again, when they heard Chip Wing loudly call:

"Here he is, and fast asleep! Why did he go in those flowers? for it is said they put people to sleep; and sometimes it is a sleep from which they never waken."

They flew to Chip Wing, and saw Spider Eyes fast asleep in a gaudy red poppy.

They shook and shook the flower, but still he slept on.

Dusty Cap wrung his hands, saying: "What if he should never wake up!"

Pointed Toes said, "I will arouse him." And he took from his side his tiny sword and entered the poppy.

It had a strange odor that made him feel faint.

He longed to lie down and go to sleep himself, but he knew that there was danger. So he kept awake with much effort.

He touched Spider Eyes on the forehead.

“What is that?” asked Spider Eyes yawning. “Oh, go away! I am so sleepy.” And he turned himself over for another nap.

But Pointed Toes was in earnest, for he knew the danger, so he touched him again, and before he could think about another nap pulled him to the edge of the poppy, where Dusty Cap and Chip Wing met them and drew Spider Eyes to the ground.

By this time Spider Eyes was fully awake, he turning to his brother, saying:

“Why did you disturb me? I was having such a lovely dream—all about the beautiful world.”

“Oh, Spider Eyes!” exclaimed Dusty Cap, Chip Wing, and Pointed Toes, all, “You would not go without us, would you?”

CHAPTER VI



YOU were with me," laughed Spider Eyes, "but it was all in a dream. Now we must call on Dr. Spider before we set out in earnest to see the beautiful world."

"He has been watching us from his door," said Chip Wing. "Why, he is coming to meet us!"

And, sure enough, out came Dr. Spider from his web, that reached from one rose branch to another.

Down he came, swinging on a fine thread; but before he touched the ground the elves ran and called to him to stop.

He paused and asked: "What do you want, my little fellows and nephews? what do you want?"

"Oh, Dr. Spider," they answered, "we have brought Spider Eyes, who has hurt his wing. We are sure you can heal him."

"Well, if that is the case," said Dr. Spider, "I will go back to my office, and I will send down the stairs, so that the hurt one can climb to my web."

Then he began to spin upward, and soon was seated in the middle of his web.

A gossamer thread now floated down on the air to the little fellows, and they knew it was from Dr. Spider.

Chip Wing caught it, and hand over hand Spider Eyes climbed up. The others flew, more quickly.

When they reached the web they found Dr. Spider waiting for them.

How daintily they stepped on each thread on their way to his office, which was in the middle of the web.

"Well, Spider Eyes," asked the doctor, "what is the matter with your wing? How did you hurt it?"

"Oh, doctor," answered Spider Eyes, "we were on our journey to see the beautiful world, and were taking a ride on a toad's back. He jumped through a thistle hedge, and some of the thistles caught my wing. It does hurt me so."

"Ah, my little fellow," said the doctor, "why were you not contented at home? Is not everything beautiful enough in Elf-land? Is not Queen Wishtah the kindest and best of Queens?"

"Oh, yes," they all said, "we love our homes, but we have heard so much of the beautiful world that we want to see it."

"Well, well! my little men," said the doctor, "I think you had better go back to your good homes. Home is the best place for every one."

Then he looked at poor Spider Eyes' wing and found it was torn very badly in three different places. No wonder it pained him.

He pulled out a sharp needle from his case, then he drew some fine thread from his body, which he fastened to the side of the wing and began to weave back and forth, over and under, in and out, until the wing looked as it did before.

Then to make it glossy he spat upon it.

"Now my work is done, and my advice to you still is, go home to Elf-land, and leave the beautiful world for others to find."



"Oh, thank you, Dr. Spider, for what you have done, but we must go and see the beautiful world."

"Well, good luck to you, my little nephews; if you still persist in going, I fear you will have a hard time. I never heard anyone who went upon that journey say on their return that they had found the beautiful world."

The elves smiled when they bade the doctor good-by, for they thought they knew better than he did.

THE LITTLE ELVES
SEEKING
THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

PART II

CHAPTER I



N and on they flew; first Chip Wing ahead, then Spider Eyes, as his wing grew stronger.

Finally they came to some crossroads, where they stopped and said one to the other:

"I wonder which road will lead us to the beautiful world?"

"See," said Spider Eyes, "see that bright fellow; he will surely know the way and with his lantern will guide us."

"Oh, I am afraid to ask him," said Chip Wing, "for he may do to us just as the toad tried to."

"But we will have to ask some one anyhow," said Spider Eyes, "since we cannot find the way ourselves."

They started to speak to him, but drew back in fright on seeing that he was not alone.

In the roadway, here and there, glowed many a worm with his little lantern.

Dusty Cap said, "We can never dare to ask them, for there are so many of them, and they will surely do us some harm."

"Well," cried Spider Eyes, "I will face the danger; see, I am going."

He flew in the air and alighted on the ground just before a large glowworm, who said to him:

"Ho, ho! what do you want, my little man?" and he brightened up his light so that it dazzled Spider Eyes.

"When did you come from Elfland, and what can I do for you?" he continued.

"Kind friend," said Spider Eyes, shading his eyes from the glare of the glowworm's lantern, "my brothers and I are going to see the beautiful world, and we wish to inquire the way."

"I do not know anything about the beautiful world myself," said the glowworm, "but you wait here, and I will ask some of the older glowworms who have traveled more than I have. To me, as I crawl over the ground, the world is dark and brown, so you see I do not pretend to know much about it. Above us are shining so many bright little lights, glittering and sparkling. They seem to journey from one place to another, just as we do with our little lanterns. Then there comes one big light from some far off place we do not know about. How it lights up the whole earth! and it shines so bright that we glowworms hide our lanterns in shame, for they seem so feeble. I suppose if you fly up there, high in the air, you can see the beautiful world. Now I will ask the way for you."

The glowworm left, and Spider Eyes could hear the buzz of their talk.



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CHAPTER II

"WHAT did he tell you?" asked Pointed Toes, coming towards him.

"Which way are we to go?" inquired Dusty Cap.

"Are we on the right road?" questioned Chip Wing.

"He said he had never seen the beautiful world," answered Spider Eyes. "But there are some bright lights overhead that he thought were the lights of the beautiful world. He was not sure, however, and so he went to ask his friends if they knew the way."

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Dusty Cap. "How his lantern flickers as he steps along!"

"Well, kind friend," inquired Spider Eyes, as he turned to the glowworm, "what did you find out? Which is the way?"

"When I asked them," replied the glowworm, "they all shook their heads. But one glowworm, the oldest one of all, said he would tell you the way to the beautiful world. Here he comes now. He will speak for himself. So good-day to you," and he left them.

Up crawled the other glowworm, and they could see that he must be old and feeble, for his light burned very dimly.

The elves gathered close around him, asking all together: "Which is the way? Tell us the way, please!"

The glowworm answered: "I cannot tell you, but I will take you to Grandfather Grasshopper, who is a great traveler, and he

must surely know all about the beautiful world. We will start at once, for Grandfather Grasshopper is at home. I saw him only yesterday."

The elves were so impatient that they flew on before, but the glowworm called them back, saying:

"You must not go so fast. I can not keep up with you. As I can only crawl, you will have to walk by my side."

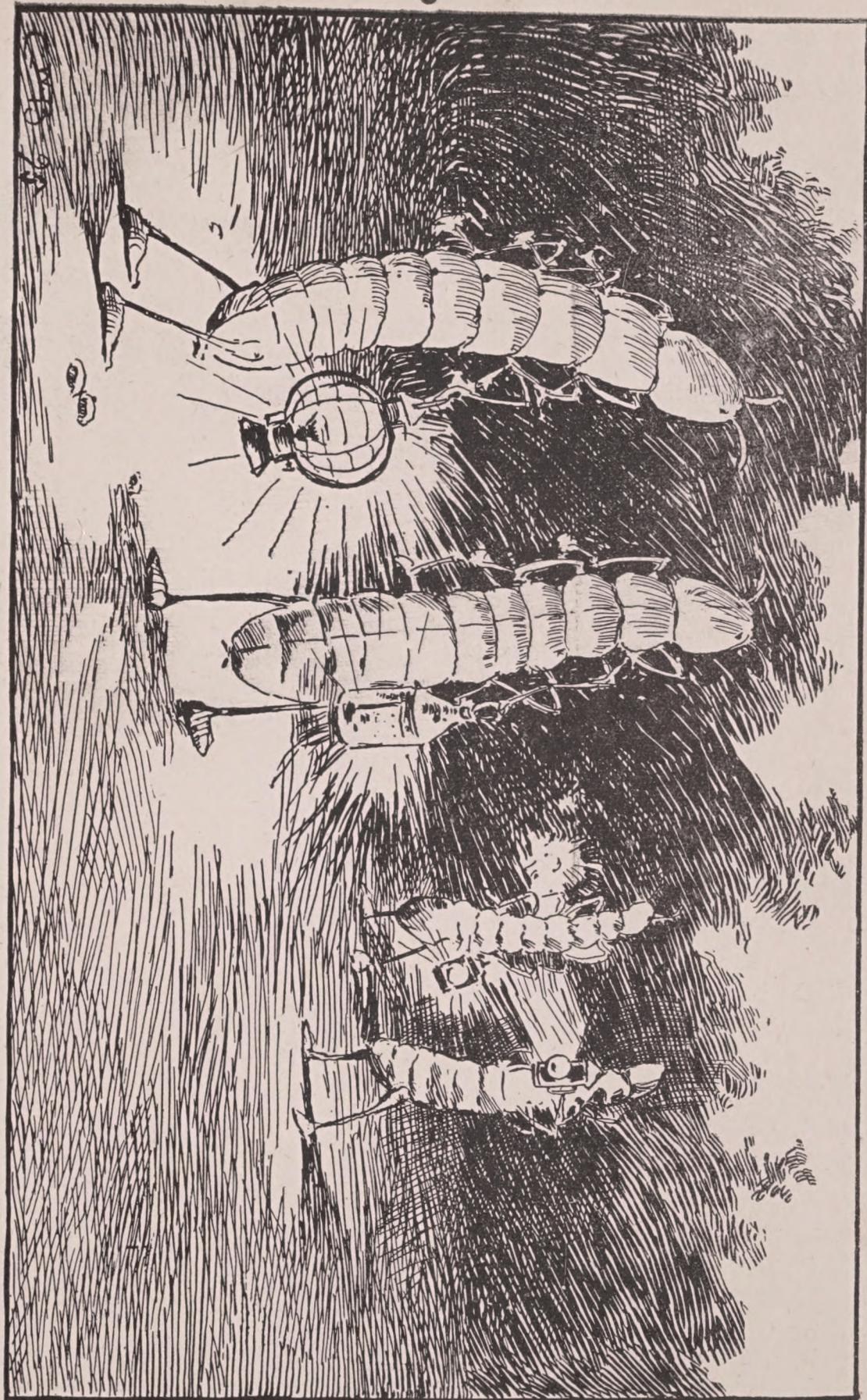
So the elves came back, thinking it was very hard to walk so slow, when the time was going fast, and as they were in such a hurry to find the beautiful world. For they must soon return to their Queen.

Yet they saw they must not make the glowworm angry, for he could go no faster, and their only hope of finding the beautiful world seemed to be through his aid.

On and on they crept, going around this stone and that root, this pool and that stump, until at last they came to a wheatfield.

Here the glowworm crawled under the fence and beckoned them to follow.

They flew over the fence and rested on some tall spears of wheat.



CHAPTER III



E moved onward. They saw him stop and knock on one of the wheat sheaves.

In response to his knock there came forth a large brown grasshopper, who said as he hopped out:

“How do you do, Mr. Glowworm? It is not often you pass here. It must be important business that brings you.”

“True,” answered the glowworm. “I seldom come this way. The air is too dry, and there is not wood enough to roam around in. I have come to-day to bring these four little elves, who wish to see the beautiful world. I thought that you, who are always on the go, and have traveled here and traveled there, would surely know the way to the beautiful world.”

“Hum, hum!” said Grandfather Grasshopper, “the most beautiful world I have ever seen is the wheatfield. And I chirp and sing as I go from one field to another. But come, I would know your friends. Perhaps I can tell them where to find their beautiful world.”

The glowworm then called the elves, who, upon seeing Grandfather Grasshopper, appeared surprised and said:

“We know very well who you are. We have seen you ever so many times. You are one of our Queen’s favorites. Were you not chosen to escort her from the north to the south?”

"Yes," answered Grandfather Grasshopper, "I know you well. Yes, I wait, with the rest of you, on our beloved Queen Wish-tah. Hello! Spider Eyes, you look full of glee. Aha! Pointed Toes, you seem very merry. Chip Wing, did I not see you last as herald to the Queen? And Dusty Cap, are you over your fall? But what are you all doing now, away from the Queen?"

"Going to see the beautiful world," they all said. "Is it far from here?"

"I do not know anything about your beautiful world," replied the grasshopper, "but I know one thing: People who try to get there are very apt to come back saying they have not found it. Now, my advice to you is, to go home and take care of our beautiful Queen, instead of searching around to find the beautiful world."

"Ahem!" said Spider Eyes, "we thank you very much, but we must go to see the beautiful world."

"Do just as you please," answered Grandfather Grasshopper. "As I told you before, I do not know the way, but I will do what I can for you. I will introduce you to Mrs. Field Mouse. Oftentimes she has friends from the great city, and she seems to know everything. I am not, however, very well acquainted with her, but she looks nice. Come, I will go with you to her home."

They thanked the glowworm and bade him good-by.

"Spider Eyes, you look tired," said the grasshopper. "You had better jump on my back; the rest can follow us."

They had to fly fast to keep pace with Grandfather Grasshopper and Spider Eyes.

They went across the field to one corner where the wheat stood close together.



CHAPTER IV

HERE Grandfather Grasshopper stopped. The elves could not imagine why. It was so sudden that Spider Eyes lost his balance and was tossed over the grasshopper's head.

He came down with such a thump that he could hardly tell his head from his heels.

He heard the grasshopper and the elves laughing, but he could not see them, for he was under a sheaf of wheat.

He called out angrily to them: "You may laugh, if you will; but I tell you it is no fun to be thrown in mid air and land on your head. You would not like it a bit, Chip Wing, to be tangled up in this place. I can not get out by myself, so do come and take some of these straws away. They are tearing my wings and my clothes."

They called, "Where are you, Spider Eyes? We cannot see you; speak again, so that we may find you."

"Here I am, right here! Now I will kick, and you will see where to pull away the straws. Quick! I am smothering."

The elves flew to the top of the sheaf, from where Spider Eyes' voice sounded, and saw that he had been pitched into a hole, where he lay on his back, fighting and struggling with the straws.

They looked at each other in dismay, asking: "How can we get him out of that hole?"

By this time Grandfather Grasshopper had hopped to the top. He said: "I can tell you how to do it."

The elves asked quickly, "How?"

"You wait here," he replied, "and I will hunt through the field for two long and stout straws to bind together."

Off he started in quest of the straws, and the little elves sat down to wait.

Spider Eyes, who had not heard what the grasshopper said, thought he had lain there long enough, and he cried out to his three companions, "Now, Dusty Cap, Chip Wing, Pointed Toes! I call that mean. I would help you. But you sit chattering, and leave me here in distress."

Then Spider Eyes kicked away at the straws very impatiently.

"We are very sorry for you," said Chip Wing. "Help is coming. Grandfather Grasshopper has gone for it."

"Well," said Spider Eyes, almost crying, "it is dreadful to lie here. The straws stick into my back and into my ears—even into my eyes—and when I move to get them out of my way, they raise such a dust that it chokes me almost to death; and I cannot see. I wish you would hurry. Do be quick!"

"Here comes Grandfather Grasshopper," they all cried. "Now you can get out sure."

Soon Grandfather Grasshopper arrived with the two straws of wheat lying across his back.

They looked like two logs of wood dragging on the ground.

As he came toward the elves he said: "You will have to pull them off. I cannot possibly do it myself. To put them on my back I had to have the help of neighbor Cricket. But he is so slow. He will not be here until we have Spider Eyes out of the hole."

"Hello, Spider Eyes," called Grandfather Grasshopper, "are you all ready for us?" and he leaped away.

Where was he going? They watched him in wonder.

He turned round and leaped backward, so that his back was toward the pile.



CHAPTER V

"COME, Dusty Cap! come, Pointed Toes! come on, Chip Wing!"

At that call the elves were on the spot, each ready to take hold of the straws.

"Now," Grandfather Grasshopper, "what shall we do next?" they all asked as they pulled them off.

"Now," replied the grasshopper, "we will take the straws and twist them together. That will make a strong, stout rope."

The elves found it hard work, for the straws were very heavy. How glad they were when they had finished.

"That looks fine!" said the grasshopper. "Now catch hold of this end of the rope and fly over the hole where Spider Eyes lies. Go high in the air, so that the other end will swing clear of everything—then drop it down carefully, keeping fast hold of the end you have."

The rope was very heavy for the little elves to fly with.

They did their best, however, and succeeded in sending the end into the hole. As it touched him, Spider Eyes growled out:

"What are you doing now? Do you call that help? Am I not teased enough by these straws, without your throwing any more down on me?"

The grasshopper, who stood upon the edge of the hole, answered him: "Do not be cross. Help is coming; help is here. Now all you have to do is to take hold of that straw rope and

kick yourself free from the wheat. Chip Wing, Dusty Cap, and Pointed Toes, fly! Pull! Fly upward and pull hard. And you, Spider Eyes, spring! jump! get free! One, two, three! Away you go! I thought that would work."

Spider Eyes came out of the hole with a spring and a jump. He was so glad to be free he answered the grasshopper with a merry laugh.

The elves then dropped the rope and flew to the ground.

As they came to the grasshopper he asked them:

"What are you going to do now? I think you had better go home."

"No, no!" they answered. "We are going to see the beautiful world. That is what we started for, and we do not intend to give it up."

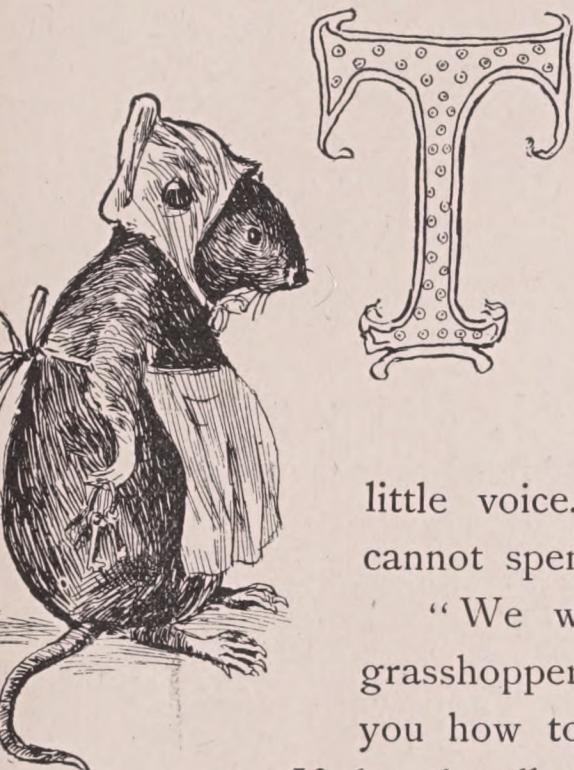
"I am very sorry I cannot help you," said the grasshopper. "But I will introduce you to Mrs. Field Mouse, as I promised. She may tell you the way. Oh! here we are at her door."

GRANDFATHER GRASSHOPPER



INTRODUCES · THE · FOUR · LITTLE · ELVES · TO · M^{rs} · FIELD MOUSE

CHAPTER VI



HE grasshopper lifted up his leg and rapped on a stalk of wheat.

“Who is there?” piped a thin, squeaky voice.

“It is I, Grandfather Grasshopper, with some friends,” he answered.

“What do you want? what are you bothering me about?” inquired the same little voice. “I am very busy with my family, and I cannot spend time to talk.”

“We want to know how you are,” responded the grasshopper, “and my friends here would like to ask you how to go to the beautiful world?”

“If that is all you want, I will gladly come down and see you,” said Mrs. Mouse, “for I know the way to the beautiful world and can tell you all about it.”

Then down the spear of wheat she came.

“Good - day, Mrs. Mouse,” said Grandfather Grasshopper. “How do you and the little ones fare to-day?”

“Not very well, thank you,” answered Mrs. Mouse, “for we were very much frightened yesterday by the men reaping this field. I thought every moment they would pull down the house. But how are you, Mr. Grasshopper, and who are your friends?”

“I am well,” he answered, “only a little tired. These are my friends, from Elfland. They want to see the beautiful world.”

“ This is Spider Eyes,
Who is growing wise.
This is Pointed Toes,
Who looks where he goes.
This is Dusty Cap,
Never caught taking a nap.
This is brave Chip Wing,
Who flies above everything.”

“ I am glad to meet you, gentlemen,” said Mrs. Mouse, making a low courtesy. “ Now, come into my house until I tidy up, and we will talk about the beautiful world. What! are you not coming in, Mr. Grasshopper? ”

“ No,” he answered. “ I have tarried too long. I must join the cavalcade that is to escort Queen Wishtah to her southern realm. Good-by! ”

And the grasshopper hopped away, leaving the elves alone with Mrs. Mouse.

How sorry they were to see him go. They were afraid already of Mrs. Mouse. She was so big, too.

They were half sorry they had not gone with him, for he was going to Elfland, and would see their Queen.

Chip Wing started to call him back, but Spider Eyes caught hold of him and stopped him, saying :

“ No, no! We must go to see the beautiful world.”

THE LITTLE ELVES
SEEKING
THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

PART III

CHAPTER I

MRS. MOUSE tripped daintily up, merrily chattering, and calling to the elves :

“Come, come! follow me.”

Then she pushed aside some stalks of wheat and led them into her tiny home.

They entered the house much against their will.

They would have preferred to remain at the door, and hoped they would not have to stay there long, and that she would soon be ready to go and show them the way to the beautiful world.

How was it she was not as pleasant as she was when Grand-father Grasshopper was there?

She called out sharply, “Spider Eyes, come in quickly, and shut the door.”

The elves thought it not quite polite.

The air was so close within, that Spider Eyes’ head began to swim, and Chip Wing, seeing him stagger, ran to open the door just a little bit.

As soon as Mrs. Mouse saw him do it, she turned around and gave Spider Eyes a slap with her paw which knocked him quite over.

“I thought I told you to shut the door. Did you not hear me? It makes such a draft the children will take cold.”

This made Chip Wing angry, and he shut the door with a bang.

"I will pay you for that," said Mrs. Mouse. "You must count the kernels in this stalk of wheat. I will punish you for setting my nerves all ajar. And you, Dusty Cap, take some straw and patch up that hole in the side of the house. Pointed Toes, you must sweep the floor; and you, Spider Eyes, must take care of my dear children. Keep them asleep. And, mind you, if I find anything wrong when I come home, I will attend to you all."

She left them with a warning nod of her head, and each elf went to his task with a heavy heart.

"What right had she to do this? She is not our Queen! We need not follow her commands!" exclaimed Spider Eyes, turning to his brothers three.

"This is not what she said she would do," said Chip Wing. "She promised to show us the way to the beautiful world. I tell you what, we will not stand this long. We will leave this place in a hurry."

When they thought she had gone far away, they flew to open the door, but found to their sorrow that it was locked, and she had taken the key.

They shook and shook the door, hoping that some part would give way. Then they turned to each other, exclaiming in great alarm: "We are prisoners!"

Just then one of the little mice awoke kicking and wanting some water.

It rolled out of bed, crying: "Oh, I am hurt; mamma, come and pick me up."

Spider Eyes heard the little one cry, and remembering that it was left in his care, ran to lift her up. But mousie was too heavy for him.

SPIDER-EYES



G.W.B. 95.

Cries GO LIFT THE BABY MOUSE

Poor little Spider Eyes tried to lift her head, then her feet, but all in vain.

Then he called to his brothers, saying: "Do come and help me. Chip Wing, you take her head, and Pointed Toes and Dusty Cap take her feet, while I put my hands under her back."

Still they were unable to lift her, and they had to leave her.

By this time her noise had awakened all the rest of the family.

What a screaming and squeaking and squealing they made, all crying, "Mamma!"

The poor little elves could hardly hear themselves think.

Spider Eyes said, "I do not like this. We must get out of it as soon as we can. What a noise, what a hubbub! I never heard such a din. Hark, there is the key in the door! She is coming! Let us slip by her and fly off."

Just as they thought they were safely past her, she caught them one by one. Giving them a sharp pinch with her teeth, she sat them on the floor with a thump, saying:

"You thought you were going, did you? Why did you not go?"

Then she stepped inside the door and locked it.

Taking up a stick she beat the little elves until they were sore and lame.

How they huddled in one corner, saying: "If this is the way to the beautiful world, we wish we had stayed at home."

Mrs. Mouse said to her children: "My little dearies, you sweet little darlings, did they abuse you? I will take good care that they do not do it again. Aha, aha! They are looking for the beautiful world, are they? I will show them the beautiful

world! They are to be my slaves. They shall serve me and mine, and that is the beautiful world for them."

She turned to them, laughingly, and said: "So you want to see the beautiful world? Well, it lies at the end of this stick I want you to understand. Now, each to your task. What! You are not going!"

CHAPTER II

As SHE saw them cling closer and closer together, she raised the stick, and was about to give each a knock. But she suddenly dropped it and shook with fear.

The house was shaking! What could be the matter? Surely, the top of the house was falling in!

The elves, for safety, took to their wings.

As they flew high in the air they looked down and saw the reason why the house had tumbled. It was attacked by a big black cat.

How her eyes did glitter and glare!

She snapped up Mrs. Mouse just as she was saying, "Hide, dearies, hide!" Then, "Children, run away!"

But the cat was too quick for them. She swallowed them all before they could even turn around.

When the elves saw that they were free, they turned to each other and asked what should they all do.

"I will tell you what," said Pointed Toes; "I would rather go home."

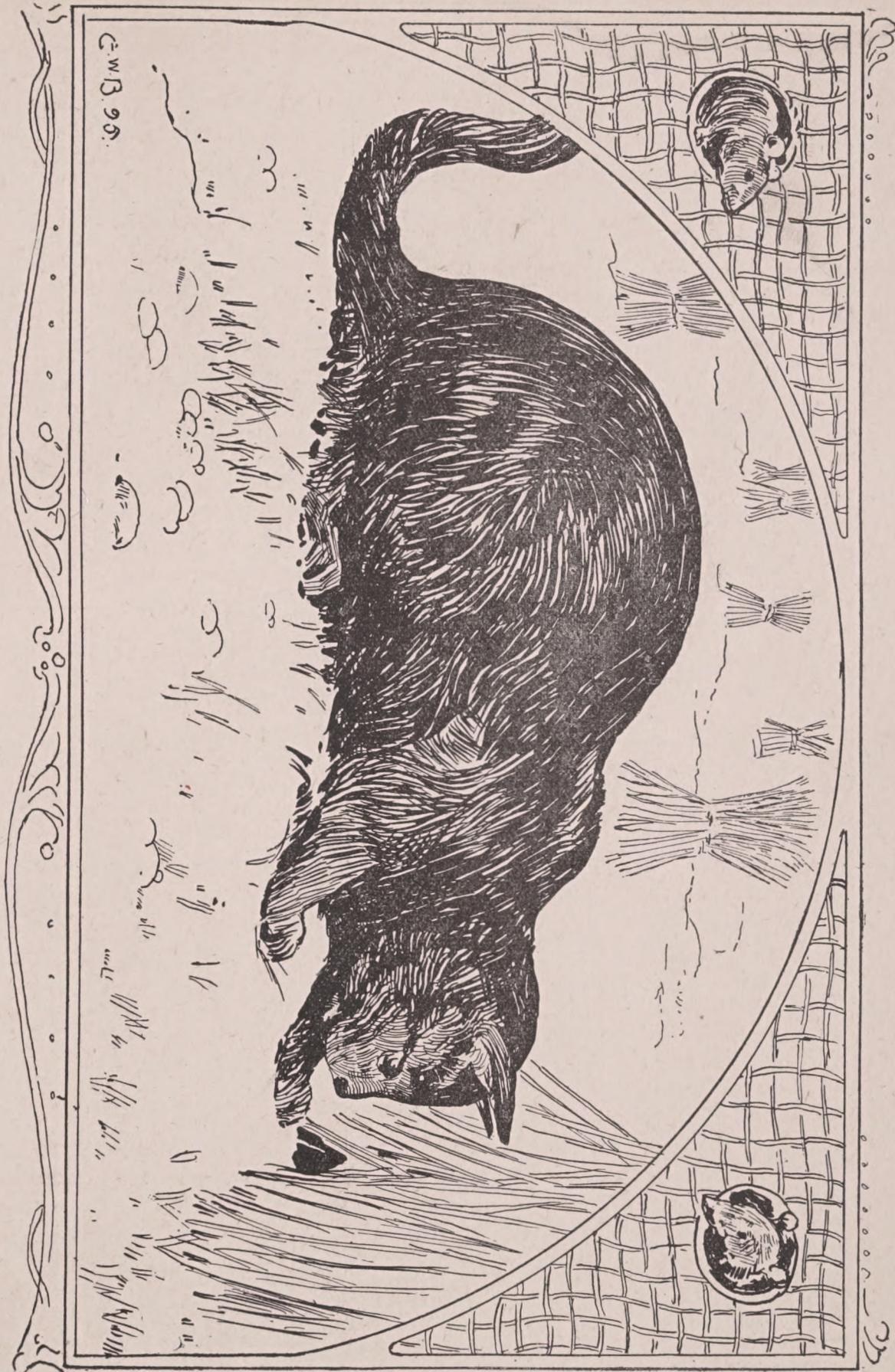
"Not faint hearted!" cried Spider Eyes. "Why, now we are surely near the beautiful world, and you must go on with us, and not turn back."

"Yes, come on," said Chip Wing. "I think, with Spider Eyes, that we are almost there."

"And I think with Pointed Toes," said Dusty Cap; "I would rather go home, too. Yet we must keep together so as to protect each other. If you still insist upon going to the beautiful world, why we will go with you."

"Well," said Spider Eyes, "we are going. We *will* find the beautiful world. We are almost there. When once I set out to do a thing I never like to turn back, and I am going to see the beautiful world."

Away they flew, still seeking the beautiful world.



CWB.95.

CHAPTER III

THEY had not flown far when Spider Eyes turned to Chip Wing, and said: "I wonder if we are going the right way? We will have to ask some one again."

"Oh, oh! do not ask!" exclaimed Pointed Toes. "I am so afraid! We surely will be hurt!"

Spider Eyes answered: "We will not be caught again. We have learned too much for that."

"Now, who will you ask?" queried Dusty Cap.

Just as he said that, they heard "Caw, caw." They jumped back with fright, it sounded so close to them.

Looking around, they saw on a stone fence a big black crow. He was so big and so black!

"Suppose we ask him," said Spider Eyes. "We have heard all about him. Everybody says he knows a great deal. It is well we met him. He is just the one to tell us the way to the beautiful world."

So they gathered courage afresh, and flew to the fence, and sat by the side of the black crow, who was trimming his feathers.

They sat very still, for they were half afraid.

Just as he was pulling one feather out very straight he happened to glance down and spied Spider Eyes.

"Ho, ho! little man, why, who are you? where did you come from? and what do you want?"

"Oh," answered Spider Eyes, "I am a little elf from Elfland. I and my three brothers wish to see the beautiful world, and you, who fly so high and go so far, can surely tell us where it is."

"Well, I guess I can," answered the crow, "for I have seen the gates many and many a time. You must fly directly east, for there are the golden gates. Now, farewell, for I must go. I have many a hill to reach in the west before the dark comes on."

Saying this, he flew away and left the little elves still sitting on the fence.

"See," said Spider Eyes, "I told you so; I knew we would find the way to the beautiful world, and from what the crow said we cannot be very far from it."

Then off they all four flew, straining every feather of their wings to reach the east.

On and on they flew; and still the east seemed so far away.

At last Spider Eyes called out: "Stop, brothers, stop! There must be a shorter way. We have been flying east long enough, and have not had a glimpse of the beautiful gates. The next person we meet will know the way to the beautiful world we are so anxious to see."

The Crow



G. W.
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and

The Four Little Elves

CHAPTER IV

SPIDER EYES had hardly finished talking when they heard the faint cry of "Whip-poor-will!"

They had surely heard that cry before.

But what did it mean?

They flew in the direction from whence the sound came.

Then stopped and listened again.

Once more the cry came; and they saw sitting on the lowest branch of a maple-tree a small brown bird with red and white spots on his body.

"Why, he is talking or calling to some one," said Pointed Toes. "We know of that bird, too, but have never heard him call before. He flies high, and he flies low, so he must surely know all about the beautiful world."

They then flew up and rested on the branch beside the bird; but he did not see them, and continued to sing his mournful strain: "Whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will!"

They grew tired of sitting still, for they were anxious to be on their way.

Spider Eyes said, "He does not see us. I am going to ask him. Bird, bird! Oh, kind bird! Little brown bird, covered with red and white spots, tell, oh tell us, the way to the beautiful world. We have flown east for many days, and just as we think we are nearing the beautiful world we find it gone. Tell, oh tell us, if this is the way, the only true way, to the beautiful world."

The brown bird ceased his call and listened to Spider Eyes. Then he shook himself and said :

" You are wrong, all wrong. You are going the wrong way. Ha, ha ! who ever heard of the beautiful world lying in the east ! Every one knows it lies in the west. Why, now, look there ! While I speak, see the gates to the beautiful world opening up."

They turned and looked, and saw, surely, the gates of the beautiful world ; and they all said again :

" Mr. Bird do—do—tell us the way to the beautiful world. It cannot be far off now. See how large the gates are and how bright the gold shines ! We could not see it if it were so far away."

" Well," answered the bird, " I have never been there. I am off for a fly, however, and I do not mind seeing you started on the right way. I hope you will reach it safely. When you come back you will find me here, resting near my nest. Then you can tell me all about it. Perhaps I would like to go, too."

Off they flew, with the whip-poor-will as captain.

On one side flew Spider Eyes and Chip Wing ; on the other, Pointed Toes and Dusty Cap.

How quick and fast they went through the wood and over the dales !

" Why," suddenly exclaimed Spider Eyes, " what is the matter ? The golden gates of the beautiful world do not shine so brightly ! Are they closing up ? Come, brothers, hurry ! hurry ! Let us fly faster."

" I must leave you now," said the whip-poor-will. " I am tired, and I must rest awhile, for I have to sing all night," and then he alighted on the branch of a tree.

They thanked him for his kindness, and flew on without stopping.



CHAPTER V

WHAT could be the matter? How dark the woods seemed to grow!

The only way they could keep together was by chirping and calling to each other.

"Oh, Spider Eyes! Stop, stop!" called Pointed Toes, "I am tired. Do let us rest awhile. Besides, it is so dark we can no longer see the gates of the beautiful world, and if we fly on we will surely lose our way. So let us rest here, and perhaps it will be lighter soon."

"We think Pointed Toes is right," said Chip Wing and Dusty Cap. "Come, Spider Eyes, come!"

So the four weary little elves flew into the notch of an old tree standing at the edge of the wood.

They found that they were very, very tired, and soon were fast asleep and dreaming of the beautiful world.

Spider Eyes awoke with a start. Where had the darkness gone?

Everywhere it was light now.

He called to Pointed Toes, Chip Wing, and Dusty Cap, "Wake up! We have rested too long!"

They all sprang to their feet, exclaiming, "What is the matter?"

Spider Eyes called, "Up, up! We must fly to the beautiful world before this day is done."

Each took a dewdrop from the edge of a strawberry leaf, with which to wash his face, for their eyes were heavy with sleep.

As they flew up, Spider Eyes said, "I do not see the gates of the beautiful world; perhaps it is because we are so close to them and they are so large. I am sorry, since we will not be able to fly so direct."

THE FOUR LITTLE ELVES



WASH THEIR FACES WITH DEW-DROPS!

CHAPTER VI

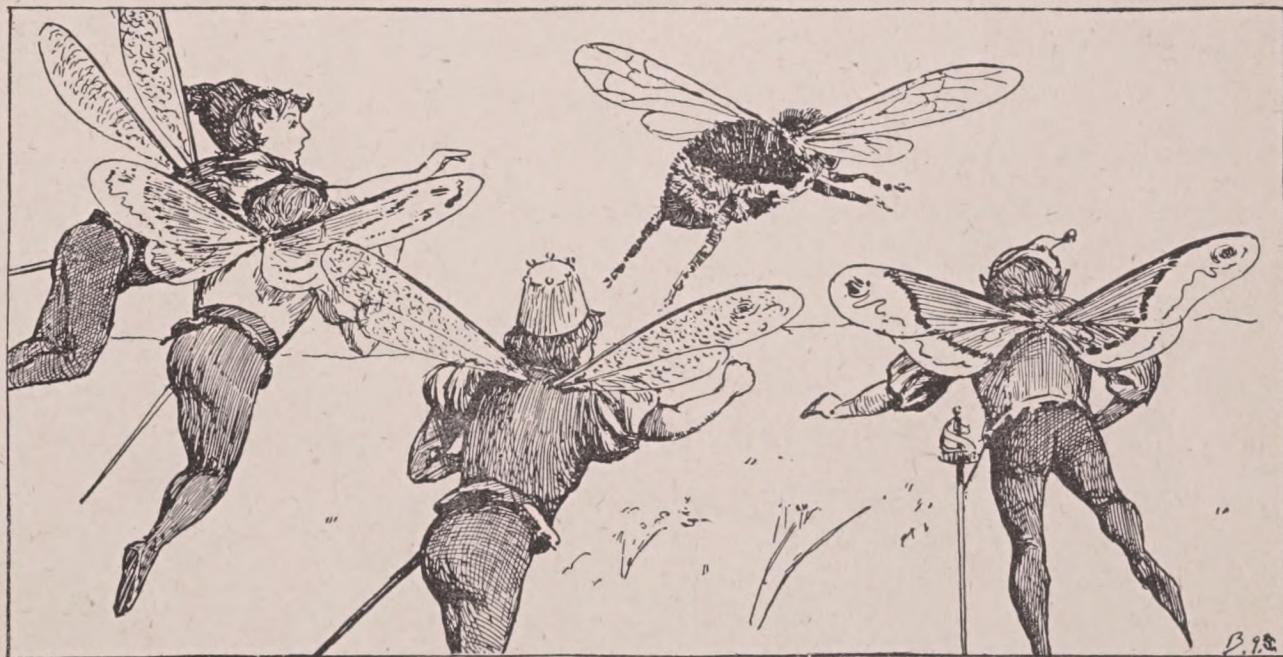


CHIP WING suddenly exclaimed: "Does not this look like the wood near our Queen's realm?"

"No, no!" said Spider Eyes, "it cannot be. We have flown too far away."

"Yet it really looks like it," said Pointed Toes. "Those trees are like the very ones we passed when we were going to make ready the Queen's palace."

"It cannot be," said Dusty Cap. "We will soon find out where we are, for we will ask the first thing that comes this way. Let us sit down on this rock and wait."



GOLD JACKET, THE BUMBLEBEE, LEADS THEM

They were but just seated when they heard, "Buzz, buzz! buzz, buzz!"

They were sure that they had heard that sound before.

The "buzz, buzz," came nearer, and looking up they saw that it was Gold Jacket, the bumblebee.

On what mission was he going?

He could not be spared long from Queen Wishtah's realm.

They flew to him and eagerly asked what he was doing here; was he, too, going to leave the Queen to see the beautiful world.

He answered them, saying: "I am glad that you four have come back."

"But we have not," said Spider Eyes. "How can you say such a thing! for we will not come back until we have seen the beautiful world."

"Buzz, buzz!" laughed Gold Jacket, the bumblebee. "You seek the beautiful world; I will lead you to it now."

How happy they felt that their old friend, the bumblebee, with his sweet words, would show them at last the beautiful world. Buzz, buzz! whiz, whiz! on flew the bumblebee, never stopping and ever calling them to follow.

On, on he flew until he reached the gates of Queen Wishtah's palace.

"There, my little friends," he said, turning to them, "are the gates to the beautiful world. You have sought it elsewhere all in vain. The beautiful world is our own home! It matters not where, if love and contentment dwell there."

THE END.

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